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# THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS AND ADVERTISEMENT CHARACTERISTICS IN SOCIAL SHOPPING

An experimental study of personality and Instagram marketing

Anni-Maria Rautio

International Business  
Bachelor's Thesis  
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Date of approval: 9 April 2018

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### **Objectives**

The main objective of this study is addressing a gap in existing research by looking into the role of The Big Five personality traits in the context of social shopping. Second, this study seeks to find different characteristics of Instagram advertisements that enhance a consumers likelihood to purchase.

### **Summary**

A literature review was constructed in order to explore the current academic research about social shopping and personality. Based on the literature review, ten hypotheses were proposed in addition to presenting a conceptual framework. The hypotheses and the conceptual framework were utilized to guide the collection of primary data. The data was gathered quantitatively through an online questionnaire which included a brief Big Five personality test (Gosling et al., 2003), questions that measured intention to participate in social shopping activities and purchase intention via social media networks and finally an experimental Instagram part. The questionnaire was constructed to meet the research objectives of this study.

### **Conclusions**

The Big Five personality traits were not found to have significant relationship with social commerce intention or purchase intention on social media. Likes on Instagram and trust were found to indicate purchase intention. Hashtags were not found to impact purchase intention or attitudes towards the brand. People with high neuroticism were found to have a high immediate purchase intention.

**Key Words:** social shopping, The Big Five, personality, purchase intention, consumer behavior, social media, marketing, Instagram

**Language:** English

**Grade:**

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ABSTRACT

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background information**

At the end of 2017, Liana Technologies ranked social commerce as one of the most significant digital marketing trends for 2018 (Liana Technologies, 2018). Approximately 30% of internet users use social media to find new products, 82% consult their mobile devices when making a purchase decision and 70% of millennials feel like their consumption choices affected by their peers (ibid). Needless to say, the social aspects of shopping in an increasing amount of social media platforms is becoming more and more important for both consumers and marketers.

Consequently, modern digital marketers have taken a full advantage of people's increasing social media browsing and social media advertisements can be seen throughout the web. These adverts include sponsored content within different social media feeds but additionally paid collaborations with bloggers, influencers and even quite normal people. The amount of different kinds of social media commercials is endless. Thus, some of them disappear in the flow of information but some catch our attention, stay in our minds and maybe even result in a purchase. In an environment full of different stimuli, it is hard to stand out. Hence, marketers are inevitably facing many problems when creating these social media advertisements and planning a social media marketing strategy.

### **1.2. Research questions**

The purpose of this paper is to provide with answers to some of the problems that digital marketers are facing when constructing their social commerce strategies. The first aim is to address a gap in existing literature by finding out if personality traits that previous research has concluded to influence online shopping behaviour in general are impactful

in the more specific context of social commerce. Second, as academic research on Instagram is quite limited, this paper aims to find characteristics of Instagram product endorsements that enhance the likelihood to buy via social networks. To put it simply, the goal of this thesis is to look at how characteristics of consumers, advertisements and peer recommendations influence buying behaviour on social media sites. More specifically, the paper addresses the following research questions:

1. What are some personality characteristics of consumers who buy products advertised or recommended by others in their social media feeds?
2. Can there be found characteristics of social media advertisements or recommendations that enhance the likelihood to purchase?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this literature review is to form an extensive understanding of previous literature and studies that have examined social shopping, social commerce, online consumer behaviour and different aspects that affect it – especially personality traits which are the main focus of this thesis. Firstly, a general overview of social shopping and social commerce industry is provided with working definitions. Secondly, the paper will examine social sharing focusing on its motivations and affects. Thirdly, persuasion and impulse buying behaviour will be explored with an emphasis on the role of peers and culture. Fourthly, an entire section will be dedicated to the role of personality in social shopping and hypotheses for this thesis are proposed. Finally, a conceptual framework will be presented based on the hypotheses.



## **2.2. Working definitions of social shopping and social commerce**

Ever since researchers got interested in exploring social shopping and social commerce, various different definitions of the two concepts with variable conclusions have emerged. What researchers disagree on is whether the terms social shopping and social commerce can be used interchangeably. Some research states that these two concepts are synonymous (Leitner & Grechenig, 2007; Coker et al., 2014). On the contrary, some research differentiates these two concepts completely from one another by stating that social shopping is a customer connecting phenomenon while social commerce connects sellers. (Stephen & Toubia, 2010; Afrasiabi & Benyoucef, 2011). Moreover, Wang and Zhang (2012) argue that while many researchers use the two terms synonymously, social shopping is most commonly regarded as a “subset of social commerce” (Wang & Zhang, 2012). For instance, social sharing and social shopping are described as the two main dimensions of social commerce. For the purpose of this literature review and thesis, these two concepts are used synonymously in order to avoid confusion between the two.

Social shopping is a combination of social media activities and shopping (Shen, 2012; Coker et al., 2015) which enables consumer-to-consumer (C2C) as well as business-to-consumer (B2C) communications (Coker et al., 2014; Chen & Shen, 2015). In social shopping, social media sites with interactive features are used to aid both purchasing and selling of products and services in both online and offline environments (Wang & Zhang, 2012). Examples of these interactive activities are brand recommendations on social shopping websites, buying a product by clicking a link on social media and online shopping with others (Coker et al., 2014). In addition to shopping features, asking social communities for help when making buying decisions is a common aspect of social shopping (Liang et al., 2011).

When participating in social shopping online, products and services can be bought by performing a “click-out”, i.e. by clicking a link that leads to an online store (Olbrich & Holsing, 2011). Social commerce helps people to be dynamically involved in marketing

and selling activities in virtual marketplaces and communities (Stephen and Toubia, 2010). According to Hajli (2015), social commerce has three different main areas : “Ratings and reviews, recommendations and referrals and forums and communities” (Hajli, 2015). Olbrich and Holsing (2011) divide the core features of social commerce in five parts “recommendation lists, ratings, styles (i.e., assortments arranged by users), tags, and user profiles.” (Olbrich & Holsing, 2011)

All in all, social commerce platforms (SCPs) provide the consumers with interactive experiences and hence they enable a distinct purchase experience from any other (Xiang et al., 2016). Furthermore, when engaging in social shopping, the consumers can receive informational benefits about products and services (Shen, J., 2012).

### **2.3. Overview of social shopping industry**

Social shopping is an arising phenomenon which is developing constantly (Wang & Zhang, 2012; Zhang et al., 2014; Chen & Shen, 2015) and which has not been researched adequately (Olbrich & Holsing, 2011; Zhang et al., 2014; Chen & Shen, 2015). According to the CEO of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, social shopping is “the next big thing” (Chen & Shen, 2015). These claims are supported by Hajli and Sims (2015) who state that social media content created by individuals has monetary value for companies. Furthermore, the significance of the social shopping industry has been confirmed by Lee et al. (2015) as they conclude that likes of a product on Facebook can be converted into sales. The value derived from social shopping can be measured based on the number of shares, revenues or improvements in brand loyalty among consumers (Liang et al., 2011).

All in all, it can be stated that social shopping is proven to be beneficial for companies. At the same time, social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter have gained popularity (Hajli, 2015) and the control in social shopping environments has largely shifted from sellers to buyers since buyers can create and share content easily (Coker et al., 2014; Hajli & Sims, 2015). In consequence, the importance of paying

attention to the social shopping industry has become increasingly important for companies (Xiang et al., 2016). New online business models that combine features of Web 2.0 technology with online commerce emerge (Afrasiabi & Benyoucef, 2011; Hajli, 2015) and companies try to encourage consumers to engage in social sharing about products (Liang et al., 2011). Developing effective messages in social commerce platforms is becoming a real challenge for firms (Coker et al., 2015) and shopping activities are made easier (Harris & Dennis, 2011). For instance, Delta Airlines and Avon have facilitated buying via social media by enabling purchasing without exiting Facebook (ibid).

In addition to academic research, several consulting firms have emphasized the importance of exploring social shopping industry. Ernst and Young (2011) state that 62% of consumers use the internet for at least as a part of the purchasing process. According to PwC (2017), 39% of consumers feel that different online social networks act as the predominant inspiration for shopping.

## **2.4. Motivations and affects of social shopping**

First, this part of the literature review will explore what motivates the consumers to engage in different social shopping activities. Second, motivations for sharing information about products and purchases in SCPs will be discovered. Third, the impact that social shopping has on both consumers and companies will be discussed.

### **2.4.1. Motivations for social shopping**

Based on earlier literature, it seems that the main driver for engaging in social shopping activities is the sense of social support that C2C interactions provide consumers with (Harris & Dennis, 2011; Liang et al., 2011; Hajli, 2014; Zhang et al., 2014; Bai et al., 2015; Hajli & Sims, 2015; Hassan et al., 2015) Social shopping generates a feeling of shopping

with friends (Shen, 2012) because these experience is similar to going to a physical shopping spree with one's peers (Afrasiabi & Benyoucef, 2011). Thus, social shoppers perceive social factors as the main motivators for being involved in SCPs (Shen, 2012; Hajli, 2014; Zhang et al., 2014; Chen & Shen, 2015). Benefits that these social factors provide include emotional support (Hajli 2014; Chen & Shen, 2015), having fun (Afrasiabi & Benyoucef, 2011), commitment and comfort (Hajli, 2014) as well as a sense of personalization (Zhang et al., 2014).

In addition to social support, various studies highlight the importance of gaining personal social capital in social shopping activities. This means that SCPs enable consumers to gain "social presence" and construct their personal status and thus build a particular brand for themselves by engaging in certain social shopping activities (Lewin et al., 2011; Shen, 2012; Zhang et al., 2014). Another important motivator for engaging in social shopping is trust in the social shopping communities (Hajli, 2014; Chen & Shen, 2015; Hassan et al., 2015). SCPs easily produce informational support by simplifying the decision-making process and distributing other's knowledge (Afrasiabi & Benyoucef, 2011; Shen 2012; Chen & Shen 2015). Finally, based on earlier literature, it is reasonable to conclude that people's desire to engage in social shopping activities is mainly driven by hedonic motivations.

#### **2.4.2. Motivations for social sharing**

In addition to getting exposed to commercial content in social media networks and being involved in social shopping environments, people who use these sites promote this content effectively by social sharing (Lewin et al., 2011). Social sharing refers to sharing knowledge with social networks on social media (Liang et al., 2011). In the context of social shopping, consumers often "pull" companies' content forward (Lewin et al., 2011).

It has been found out that consumers prefer to share their shopping experiences in their own social networks rather than communicating straight on business's own pages (Harris

& Dennis, 2011). Social shopping environment is generally seen as an inspiring platform where people dare to share their experiences and know-how about brands, products and services (Hajli, 2014). Social sharing during the online purchasing process is viewed as one of the most important aspects of social shopping (Shen, 2012). Chen and Shen (2015) and Liang et al. (2011) claim that one's intention to social sharing is dependent on a consumer's relationship with the social shopping community as a whole. While social shopping seems to be perceived as an empowering experience, some consumers are increasingly worried about privacy issues when sharing information on social networks (Shen, 2012).

### **2.4.3. Impact of social shopping**

Both companies and individuals can gain significant benefits from social shopping (Hajli, 2015). This section of the literature review will explore the impacts of social shopping from the point of view of these two groups.

#### **2.4.3.1 Impacts on companies**

What makes social shopping beneficial for firms is that Facebook "Likes" have been proven to have a significant relationship with the amount of sales of the product or service (Lee et al., 2015). Many firms perceive that they have received fast results and gained competitive advantage while minimizing risks, costs and unfavourable feedback when engaging in social shopping activities (Augar & Zeleznikow, 2013). The great importance of consumers for firms is highlighted when creating value for existing and potential customers, improving B2C relationships and enhancing brand loyalty (Hajli, 2015). Social shopping helps companies to enhance their customer relationship management operations and engaging in these activities have a positive impact on purchasing intention (ibid). Furthermore, social shopping helps companies to acquire relevant information from

current customers about their wishes as well as find new potential customer services (Afrasiabi & Benyoucef, 2011).

Consequently, companies have started forming social commerce strategies. Two main strategies are forming interactive, virtual social shopping communities (Hajli, 2015) and strategically turning online discussions to companies' interest (Afrasiabi & Benyoucef, 2011; *ibid*). An example of taking advantage of the opportunities that social shopping creates for firms is Volkswagen's "the fun theory" commercial which allured over 7 million views and shares without costs (*ibid*). While the current research highlights many beneficial aspects of social shopping, social media can be perceived as a threat for companies since negative information about products and services is spread in SCPs as well.

#### **2.4.3.2. Impacts on consumers**

Secondly, individual consumers are impacted by social shopping as well since social interaction can notably affect their consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions (Bai et al., 2015; Hajli & Sims, 2015). Specifically, C2C relationships in SCPs are found to be the main influencers of purchasing intention (Stuth & Mancuso, 2010; Chen & Shen, 2015). It has been found that especially young consumers tend to buy products based on online peer endorsements (Harris & Dennis, 2011).

Social shopping results in social learning which means that people acquire opinions and behavioural consumption habits when being involved in SCPs (Chunling et al., 2012). Social shopping enables consumers to find new products while feeling gratification and forming relationships (Shen, 2012). Thanks to social participation, consumers become fascinated by SCPs quickly (Hajli, 2015) and they are able to choose better products (Afrasiabi & Benyoucef, 2011).

## **2.5. Persuasion in social media advertising**

This part of the literature review explores persuasion and impulse buying in social media context which can be perceived as being correlated in many cases. In addition, the role of peers and culture in social media consumer behaviour will be discussed.

Commercials on social media can be successful if consumers accept the message (Lewin et al., 2011). However, too much unnecessary commercial content on social media can evoke negative associations among consumers (ibid). Coker et al. (2014) state that the most typical rewards that persuade social shoppers to click are economic benefits which deliver utilitarian value. The persuasiveness of an advertisement is enhanced with good ratings and tags (Olbrich & Holsing, 2011). Especially Facebook likes are found to be a reliable guarantee of value (Lee et al., 2015). Using lists and styles in social media advertising lowers the likelihood of consumers clicking the commercial (Olbrich & Holsing, 2011). Lee et al. (2015) argue that the most persuasive approaches on social media are aggressive methods that offer complimentary trial periods and returns in order to decrease the perceived risk of purchasing. However, Lewin et al. (2011) claim that the most persuasive social media adverts make consumers feel like they can make an impression to others, their individual requirements are addressed, their personal brand is improved or if they feel amused. Finally, Stuth and Mancuso (2010) state that consumers' shared views with adverts and perceived friendliness are the key persuasive elements.

### **2.5.1. Impulse buying behaviour via social networks**

Most of social shoppers' purchasing behaviour on SCPs is impulsive (Xiang et al., 2016). Therefore, it might be suggested that many findings on impulse buying behaviour can be applied in the social shopping context as well. This suggestion is further supported by the finding that both social shopping and impulsive shopping behaviour are mostly driven by hedonic motivations (Coughlan, 2016).

Several kinds of impulse buying patterns on social media have been identified: "pure

impulse buying, suggestive impulse buying and planned impulse buying” (Xiang et al., 2016). Pure impulse buying happens completely impulsively without an initial plan, suggestive impulse buying means acting based on an interaction on social media and planned impulse buying indicates searching for specific products on SCPs (ibid).

Impulse buying tendency is highly impacted by visual, social and hedonic aspects of social shopping (ibid). Both women and men can equally be impulsive buyers (Gasiorowska, 2011; Coughlan, 2016). However, women act impulsively in high engagement environments while men tend to prefer ones that include lower engagement (Gasiorowska, 2011). Age, on the other hand, affects impulse buying tendency as young consumers tend to practice such behavior the most (Coughlan, 2016).

### **2.5.2. The role of peers**

The role of peers is extremely important in social commerce since relationships and interactions with others are the core parts of social shopping (Liang et al., 2011). As concluded earlier in this paper, social shoppers like to share information via social networks with peers (Hajli, 2014; Hajli, 2015). This communication impacts the intention to buy both directly by generating conformance among peers and indirectly by increasing product involvement (Chunling et al., 2012). When contrasted with an anonymous review, consumers trust information shared by peers significantly more (Afrasiabi & Benyoucef, 2011; ibid), especially when an individual has strong ties with the person who shared the information (Chunling et al., 2012). The intensity of ties is determined based on how much an individual wants to preserve a relationship on social media and these relationships vary from best friends to people you have never met (ibid). When it comes to peer-reviewed online content, both positive and negative reviews are trusted (Gavilan et al., 2018). However, bad ratings by peers are regarded as more reliable even when the amount of reviews is small (ibid). Peer endorsements are generally found to increase the likelihood to purchase via social networks (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Zhu & Zhang, 2010) especially when a product is not relatively known (Zhu & Zhang, 2010). While most



research seems to see peers as a significant influencing aspect in shopping behaviour, Duan et al. (2008) oppose this by stating that positive peer endorsements do not result in better sales for companies.

### **2.5.3. The role of culture in social media shopping**

A significant portion of current research on social shopping has looked at one specific nation mainly in Asia (e.g. Cheung et al., 2005; Tsang & Chang, 2010; Zhu & Zhang, 2010; Chunling et al., 2012). For instance, Chinese people tend to engage in social shopping activities easier than in the United States – they interact about products and purchases on social media more often and ask for consultation and help during a purchasing process (Muralidharan & Men, 2015). Furthermore, Ng (2012) states that social shopping marketing strategies are more effective in Asia than Latin America. As differences among cultures are proven to emerge in social shopping context, a further examination of the similarities and differences would be worthwhile.

Culture might explain why the current research focuses on Asia so strongly. The culture in these countries is generally collectivistic and social shopping revolves around social relationships and being inspired by peers. Hence, the impact of social shopping might be especially powerful there. It would be interesting to find out whether people of western, more individualistic cultures have different social shopping habits. Additionally, technology plays an important role in the everyday lives of Asian consumers compared to African and Latin American regions where many people might not be able to access the Internet or participate in online shopping.

## **2.6. The role of personality**

In addition to different aspects mentioned in previous part of the paper, personality traits determine individual's shopping behaviour significantly (Chen & Lee, 2008; Wang & Yang,

2008; Tsang & Chang, 2010). Previous research states the need of studying the impact of human behaviour in online C2C context (Tsang & Chang, 2010). As, the main topic of this thesis revolves around personality and social shopping, this entire section of the literature review will be dedicated solely to the role of personality in shopping habits. First, an understanding of existing research perspectives on personality and consumer behaviour will be formed. Secondly, The Big Five personality traits will be presented. Lastly, the findings of current research will be presented and the hypotheses of this thesis will be formed based on existing literature.

### **2.6.1. Current Research**

As this thesis revolves around the role of personality traits in social shopping, a broad review of existing studies on the topic is required. Different personality variables' effect on online consumer behaviour has not been investigated considerably (Cheung et al., 2005; Bosnjak et al., 2007). Thus, academic research that explores personality in social shopping context is difficult to find. Since the relationship between personality and social shopping is still an unstudied topic, findings and theories from the studies that are closely related to the topic will be applied when constructing the conceptual framework and forming the hypotheses.

The current research mainly explores the relationship between personality traits and online shopping behaviour in general (Bosnjak et al., 2007; Chen & Lee, 2008 ; Wang & Yang, 2008; Huang & Yang, 2010 ; Tsao & Chang, 2010; Chen, 2011). Furthermore, some studies have made some observations of the role of personality while examining peer communication on social media (Chunling et al., 2012; Chen et al., 2016; Xiang et al., 2016). Personality traits and shopping behaviour without an online context has also been studied (Gohary & Hanzaee, 2014).

Most of the current study of personality traits and shopping behaviour has been conducted in Taiwan (Chen & Lee, 2008; Wang & Yang, 2008; Huang & Yang, 2010;

Tsao & Chang, 2010) and in other parts of Asia (Gohary & Hanzaee, 2014; Chunling et al., 2012). The research has looked at the phenomenon by either studying one specific personality trait (Wang & Yang, 2008) or by applying a theory. Examples of employed theories include Socialization Theory Framework (Chunling et al., 2012), Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Chen & Lee, 2008), 3M Model of Motivation and Personality (Bosnjak et al., 2007) and The Big Five Model of Personality (Huang & Yang, 2010; Tsao & Chang, 2010; Gohary & Hanzaee, 2014).

### **2.6.2. The Big Five Model**

Since the aim of this thesis is to explore a research area that has been investigated in a limited manner, a model that has been explored the most in the field is used in this thesis. As noted earlier, multiple researchers have studied the role of The Big Five personality traits in shopping behaviour. Hence, it will be applied for the purpose of this thesis, too. Additionally, it is a widely accepted model in personality psychology (Goldberg, 1992) although personal differences among individuals are endless (Goldberg, 1990). The Big Five personality traits are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience (ibid).

People with high extraversion tend to be social, communicative, energetic and overall extroverted (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Second, high agreeableness means being polite, trusting other people, kind, easy to work with and open-minded (ibid). Third, individuals with high conscientiousness tend to plan everything in advance, refuse to give up easily, perform in every task thoroughly (ibid). Fourth, traits associated with high neuroticism include being nervous, gloomy, unhappy, emotionally unstable and insecure (ibid). Finally, openness to experience indicates great imagination, being creative, unique, curious, open-minded and smart (ibid).

### **2.6.3. The role of personality traits in online shopping behaviour**

Huang and Yang (2010) indicate that The Big Five traits have a significant impact on online shopping behaviour. Openness to experience indicates a high tendency to shop online due to adventurous experiences and gaining inspiration (Bosnjak et al., 2007; Wang & Yang, 2008; Huang & Yang, 2010). Gohary and Hanzaee (2014) also found that openness predicts impulse buying. Impulse buying predicts online shopping intention significantly (Chen, 2011). Additionally, the shopping motivation of people with high degree of extraversion is driven by social aspects of online shopping (ibid) and they are highly likely to shop online in general (Bosnjak et al., 2007). Hedonic shopping experiences are important to them (Wang & Yang, 2008; Tsao & Chang, 2010). As adventurous experiences, becoming inspired by others and social aspects are proven to be some of the key aspects of social shopping, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Openness to experience is positively related to intention to engage in social shopping activities.

H2: Openness to experience is positively related to purchase intention via SCPs.

H3: Extraversion is positively related to intention to engage in social shopping activities.

H4: Extraversion is positively related to purchase intention via SCPs.

Gohary and Hanzaee (2014) state that neuroticism leads to impulsive buying behaviour. However, this statement is disregarded in this thesis because the research was conducted in “traditional” physical shopping environment. In contrast, a study by Chen (2011) about online shopping behaviour concluded that neuroticism is negatively related to impulse buying online. Also, the main motivator for impulsive buying for people with high neuroticism is driven by utilitarian shopping values (Tsao & Chang, 2010; Gohary & Hanzaee, 2014). As concluded earlier in this literature review, social shopping is mainly driven by hedonic shopping values. Furthermore, Huang and Yang (2010) claim that in online shopping context, people with high neuroticism do not have social motivations for shopping online. As social aspects are strongly present in social shopping, it is

reasonable to assume that neuroticism is negatively related to social shopping intention and purchase intention.

H5: Neuroticism is negatively related to intention to engage in social shopping activities.

H6: Neuroticism is negatively related to purchase intention via SCPs.

People with high conscientiousness are claimed to be skilled at managing their impulsive feelings when making purchasing decisions and their shopping behaviour is largely dependent on utilitarian shopping values (Gohary & Hanzatee, 2014). These findings might predict negative relationship towards social shopping. When it comes to agreeableness and shopping behaviour, findings are quite limited. However, Wang and Yang (2008) state that agreeableness often leads to developed affection towards online shopping and since these people tend to trust the opinions of others. Furthermore, innovative individuals who are open to experience are highly likely to buy products in online environments (Chen, 2011). Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses are predicted:

H7: Conscientiousness is negatively related to intention to engage in social shopping activities.

H8: Conscientiousness is negatively related to purchase intention via SCPs.

H9: Agreeableness is positively related to intention to engage in social shopping activities.

H10: Agreeableness is positively related to purchase intention via SCPs.

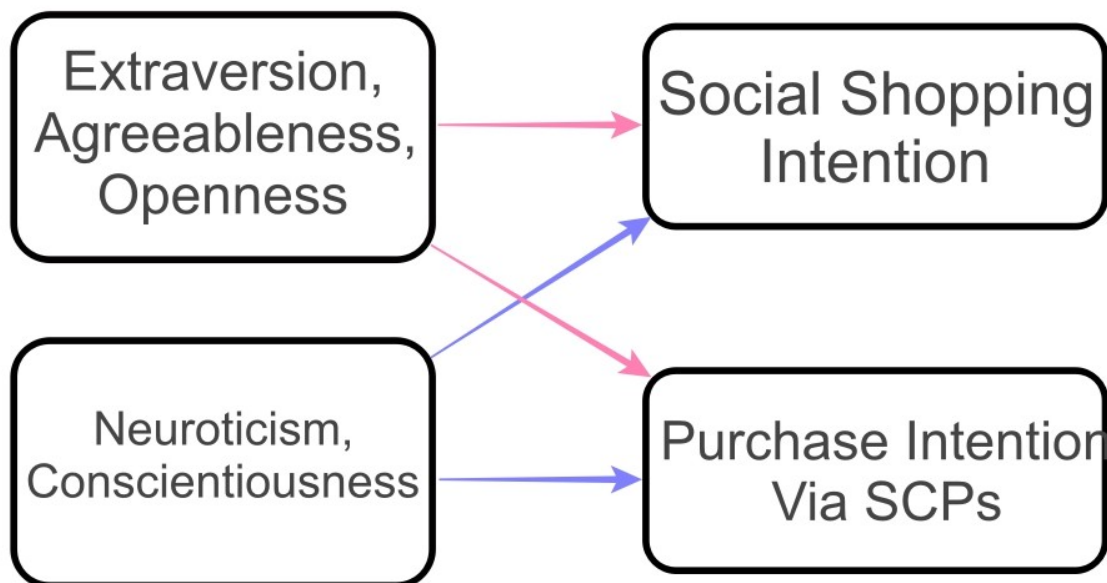
The goal of this paper is to understand the impact that The Big Five Traits have on social shopping intention and final purchase decision on SCPs. Furthermore, this thesis will compare the possible differences that these traits possess in social shopping context.

In addition to The Big Five personality traits, Chen et al. (2016) conclude that impulsive personality traits increase the likelihood to buy impulsively when engaging in Facebook C2C activities. Impulsive personality affects online shopping in general, too (Chen, 2011). Passion is found to be one determinant of online shopping intention, too (Wang & Yang,

2008). Other traits associated with high likelihood of buying products and services online include high trust in others, value awareness and desire for material (ibid). According to Chunling et. al (2012), people who have a high need to be unique are less likely to be influenced by their friends. Finally, the degree of elaboration affects online shopping intention (Chen & Lee, 2008).

## 2.7. Conceptual Framework

The following conceptual framework (Figure 1) is formed on the basis of previous research discussed in this paper. The framework illustrates the ten proposed hypotheses presented in this literature review and will guide future collection of primary data. The framework presents The Big Five personality traits and their impact on social shopping intention (an individual's intention to participate in social shopping activities) and purchasing intention via SCPs (an individual's intention to buy products and services via SCPs). Positive relationships are indicated with pink and negative ones with blue.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.**

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodology used in the research. First, the research methods of the research are explored. Second, the design of the social commerce questionnaire is presented. Third, the sampling methods and data analysis are processed.

#### **3.1. Research methods and data collection**

Before collecting any primary data, it is necessary to form an extensive understanding of the existing literature that has explored social shopping, personality and its role in consumer behaviour. It is also crucial to be familiar with the current theories and concepts about these topics. Thus, an extensive literature review on the existing academic and articles was constructed.

As stated in the literature review, social shopping is a fairly new, arising phenomenon which has still not been investigated too broadly. Based on the extensive literature research it was concluded that literature about the role of personality traits in social shopping context specifically was not found. Hence, primary data collection became essential in order to explore this topic in depth. As previous research has investigated the role of the Big Five Personality in online shopping, the hypotheses and conceptual framework of this study were formed based on these previous findings. The assumption that guided to this decision was that social shopping would be a similar phenomenon to online shopping.

Based on the literature review, the formed hypotheses and the conceptual framework, an online questionnaire was designed in order to investigate the role of personality traits in social shopping and to compare features of social media advertisements. The participants of the survey were reached via social media in order to attract social media users to

answer the questionnaire. A Facebook group for students and alumni of Aalto University Mikkeli Campus as well as personal Facebook and Snapchat accounts were utilized to distribute the survey. All the participants volunteered to answer the questionnaire and the answers were strictly anonymous and confidential.

### **3.2. Questionnaire design**

The questionnaire was carefully constructed in order to find some answers to the research questions that were presented earlier. The aim of the survey was to quantitatively find some personality traits that influence attitudes in social shopping environments, social shopping intentions and purchase intentions via social networks. Another goal of the questionnaire was to examine if certain features of social media advertisements influence purchase intention or attitudes towards the ad. The online survey was designed using Webropol 3.0. software and it had eight pages.

The first part of the survey included some demographic measures – gender, age and nationality. Additionally, the respondents' basic social media habits were explored by asking if they use social media and Instagram. In order to avoid bias among the respondents, the questionnaire was titled extremely generally as 'Social Media Survey'.

The second part of the survey included a brief 10-item measure of The Big Five personality traits developed by Gosling et al. (2003). The model was chosen out of many alternatives because a shorter survey is less time consuming for the respondents and since the model has been widely used in previous research about the role of personality in online shopping and in other personality related research. The questions of this section were measured on a seven point Likert scale, with higher numbers indicating a stronger agreement with the statements. A seven point Likert scale was chosen since the aim of this section was to imitate the original study entirely.



The third part of the questionnaire was an experimental section which presented a concrete real-world example of an Instagram advertisement made by Andy Jakobsen who was told to be a friend that the participant of the survey follows on Instagram (Figure 2). Andy Jakobsen is a fictional person invented by the author of this thesis and Andy's Instagram account was made solely for the purpose of this paper. An example post was created on Andy's Instagram about Herschel Supply's Trade Luggage set to imitate real sponsored content on Instagram. The screenshot of the post was edited so that it seemed like it had 282 likes and one comment in order to make the advertisement more realistic. The caption written by Andy was adapted from Herschel Supply's own Instagram captions. The aim was to avoid bias based on gender so a gender-neutral name was chosen for the product endorser. Additionally, the product chosen for the ad was Herschel Supply's luggage set in order to continue with the gender-neutral theme in the ad.

The questionnaire showed the respondents one of two Instagram posts based on month of birth which the respondents were asked to provide at the beginning of the questionnaire. The participants who were born from January to June saw an Instagram post with a hashtag '#Ad' and the respondents born from July to December were shown an advertisement with a hashtag '#Sponsored'. Otherwise the posts were identical and they included two additional hashtags : '#WellTravelled' and "#CommunityOfTravellers". Instagram was chosen as the social media platform for this study for two main reasons. First, Instagram has not been significantly present in existing research compared to Facebook and Twitter, for example. Second, Instagram is filled with social media influencers who promote different brands and products to a huge amount of consumers. Hence, it can be argued that investigating Instagram would be appropriate.

After seeing the Instagram post, the participants of the survey were asked to recall the three hashtags used in the post. This was done to measure how well the hashtags are remembered only seconds after being exposed to the Instagram post. The respondents were not allowed to go back to review the Instagram post. In addition to hashtag recall, the respondents were asked if they would like the picture, look for more information about the products and buy the item.

Then, a set of questions were asked to find out how much the respondents trust Andy and the brand, their likelihood to buy and how likely they would spread positive word-of-mouth about the products. The set of word-of-mouth questions was adapted from Alexandrov et al. (2013).

In addition, the questionnaire had 12 questions about social shopping in general. The purpose of these questions was to measure a consumer's intention to participate in social shopping activities and to measure a consumer's purchase intention via social networks. Questions on social shopping intentions were adapted from Liang et al. (2011), Hajli (2014) and Hajli (2015) and questions measuring purchase intention were adapted from Liang et al. (2011) and Shiau and Luo (2012). The questions were slightly edited to suit this research specifically and they were measured on a five point Likert scale. Two additional questions on the overall impact of social media marketing were asked.

Lastly, an open-ended brand recall question was presented in order to explore how well the participants of the survey remembered the name of the brand on the Instagram post after answering other questions for a couple of minutes.

10. Andy is your friend on Instagram. Please take a look at the following Instagram post :



Figure 2: Instagram post with hashtag '#ad'.

### 3.3. Sampling

The sample of the study was a non-probability sample. As the time to collect the responses to the questionnaire was restricted, convenience sampling method was used. While the problem of this method is the fact that the sample does not represent the entire population, the method enabled efficient and facile collection of responses via different social media channels. In addition to sharing the survey on social media, the participants of the survey were asked to voluntarily share the survey to their friends. Hence, the survey had some features of snowball sampling as well.

The n of the sample was 117. As the study revolved around shopping via different social media channels really strongly, only the responses of people who use social media were included in the data analysis to ensure that the sample represents frequent social media users. In consequence, three responses were left out. All in all, 17,6% of the people who opened the questionnaire online answered the questionnaire. 72% of the people who started answering the survey ended up completing it and submitting their answers.

### **3.4. Data analysis**

The collected data was coded and analysed with IBM SPSS Statistics software. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and independent samples t-tests. Reliability analysis was used to understand if the survey questions measure the same underlying construct reliably. Furthermore, linear regression analyses and bivariate correlation were used in order to find correlations among the variables and to test the hypotheses of the study.

## **4. FINDINGS**

This section presents the findings of the research. The findings are organized thematically. First, the respondent profile will be introduced. Second, a reliability analysis is presented in order to demonstrate the reliability of different question sets. Third, the ten hypotheses are tested. Fourth, the findings of the Instagram experiment are presented. Last, other relevant findings are addressed.

### **4.1. Respondent Profile**

The number of respondents was 117 in total. Females represented the majority of the respondents by 74% while the rest of the respondents were male participants. The

uneven gender distribution was quite unexpected since the survey was intentionally made quite gender-neutral. The ages of the participants ranged from 12 to 44 and the median age was 22 years. 87,9% of the respondents were Finnish while 12,1% of the sample represented other nationalities. 97,5% of the respondents reported that they use social media. Out of these social media users, 84,2% use Instagram. Out of the Instagram users, 85,4% stated that they use Instagram at least once every day. Finally, all of the social media users were asked if they have bought a product or a service via social media. 31,9% reported that they have, 12,1% could not remember and 54,3 have not. All of this information is presented graphically in figures three to nine as reported by the respondents.

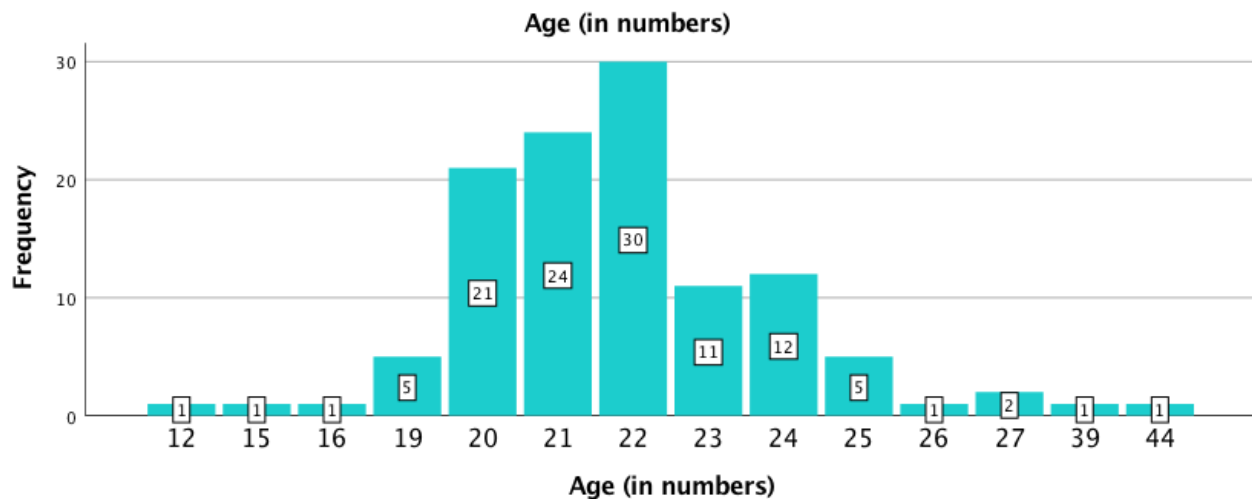


Figure 3: Age distribution

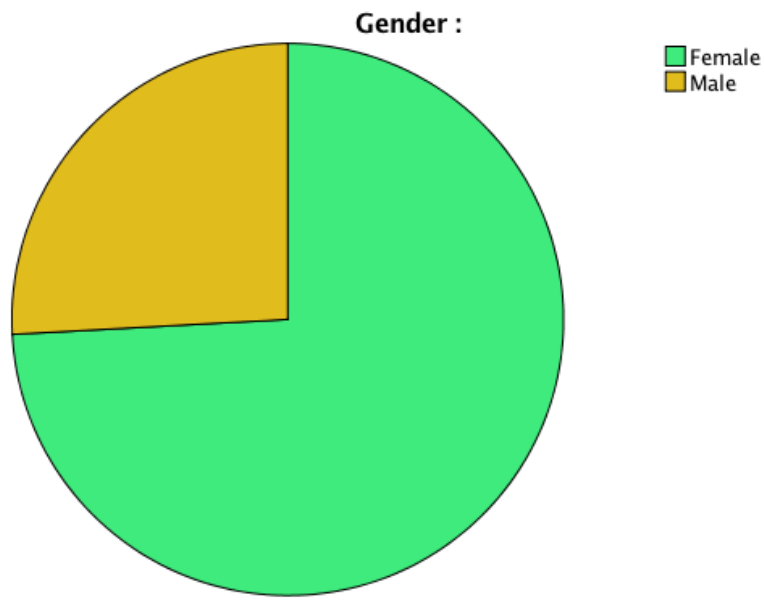


Figure 4: Gender distribution

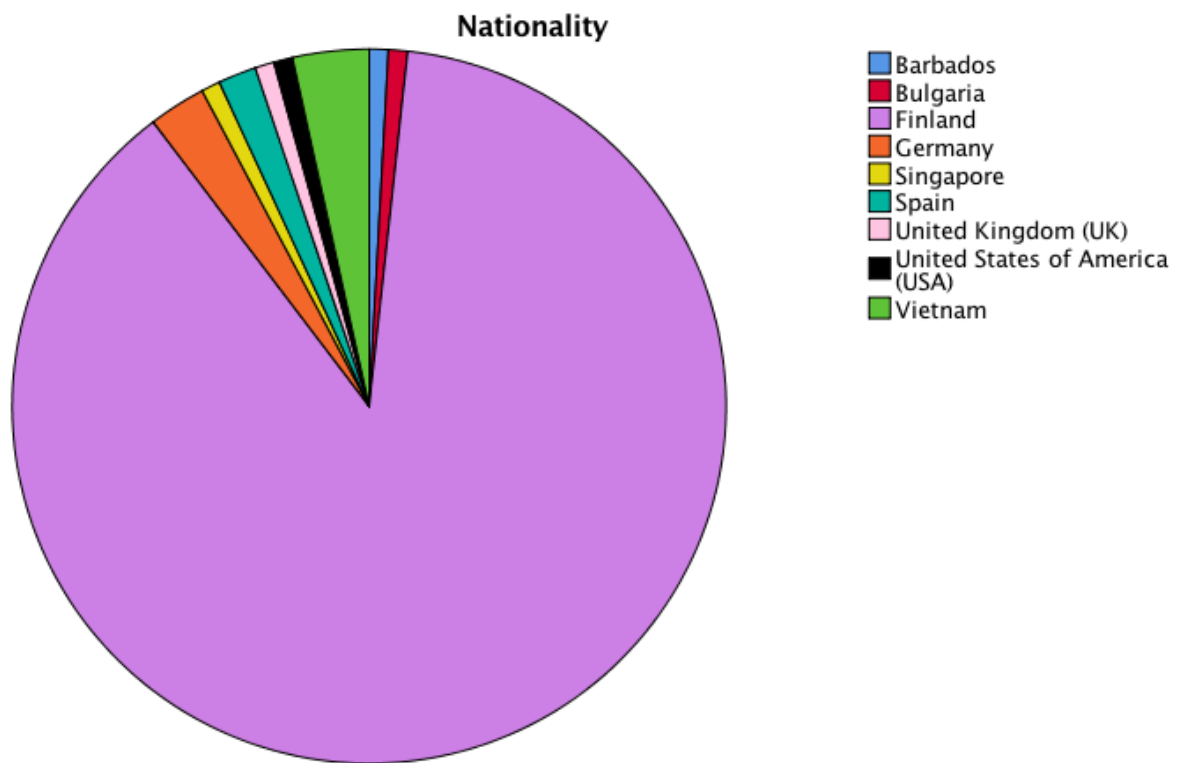


Figure 5: Distribution of nationalities

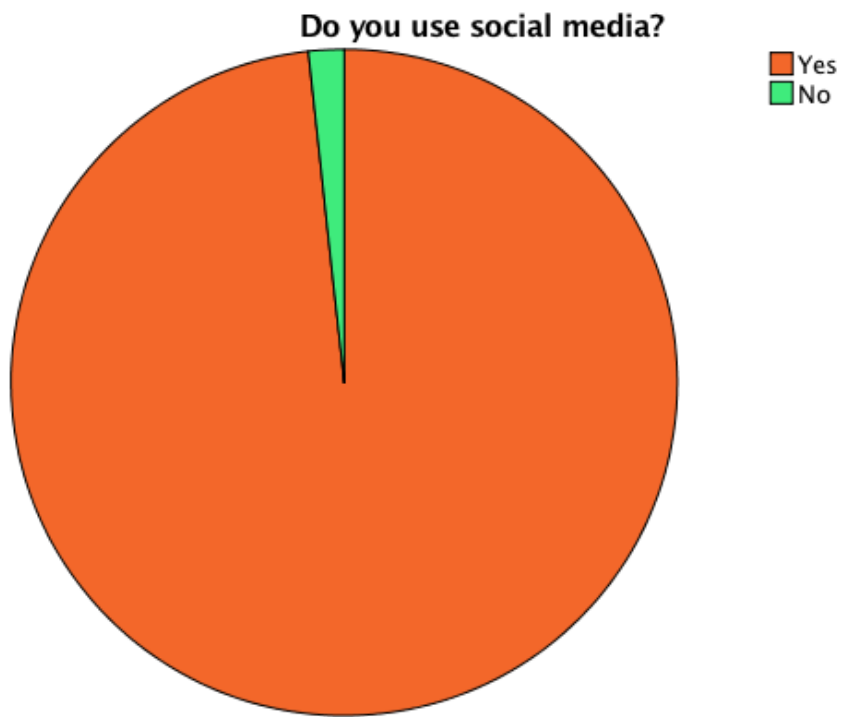


Figure 6: Social media usage

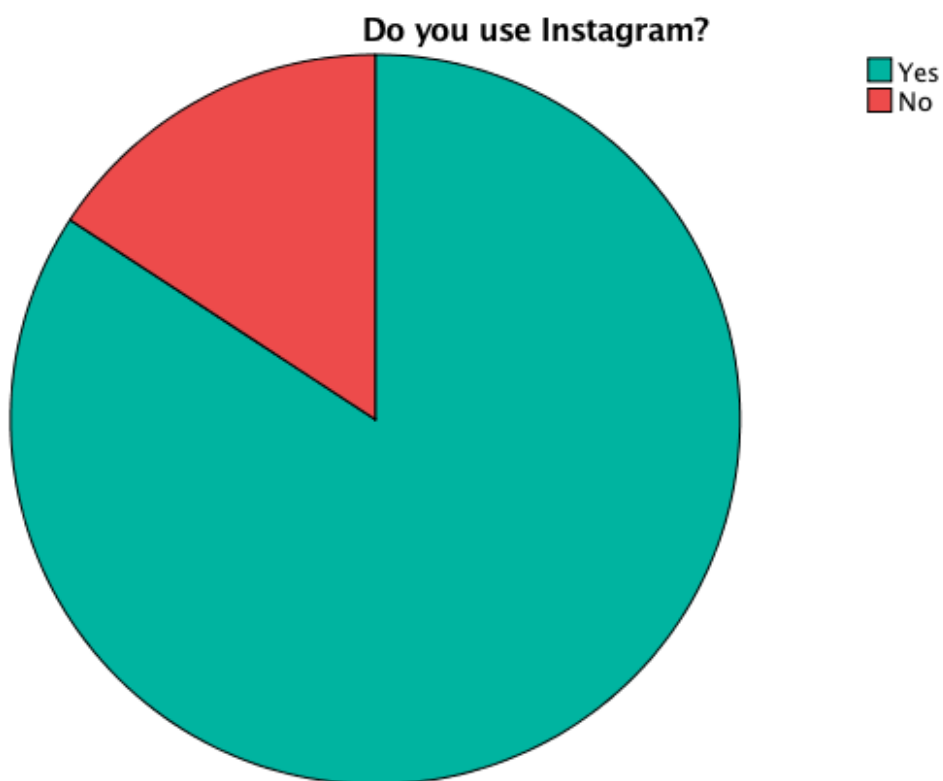


Figure 7: Instagram usage

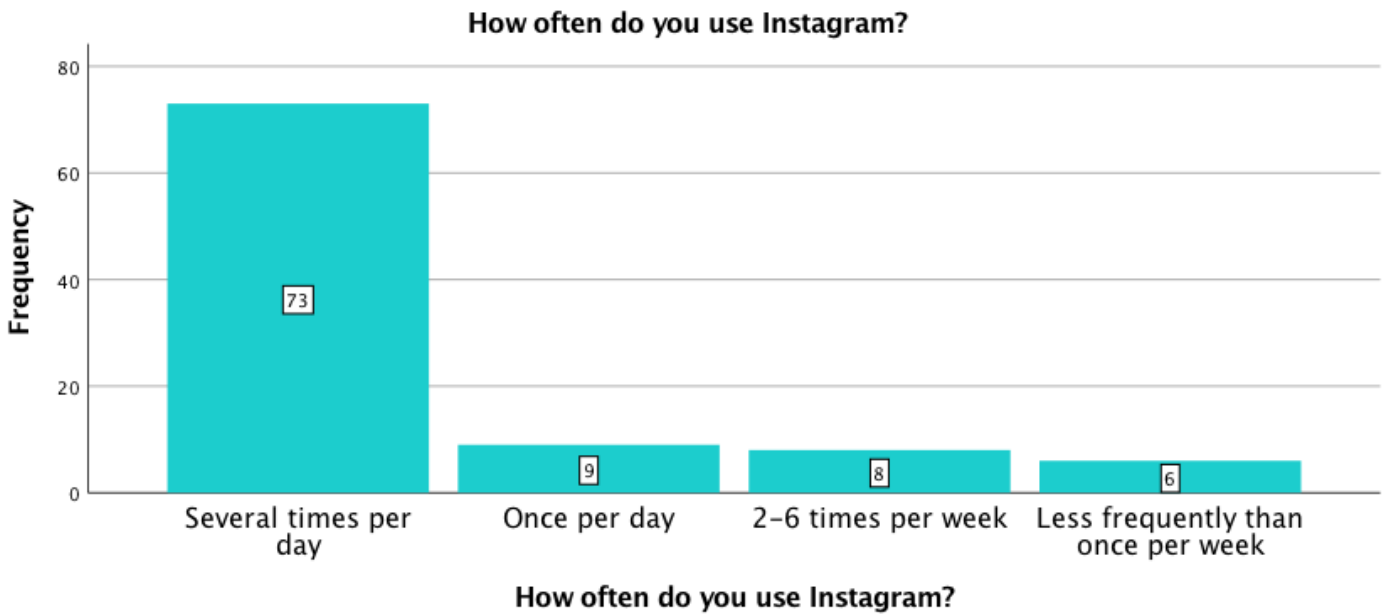


Figure 8: Frequency of Instagram usage

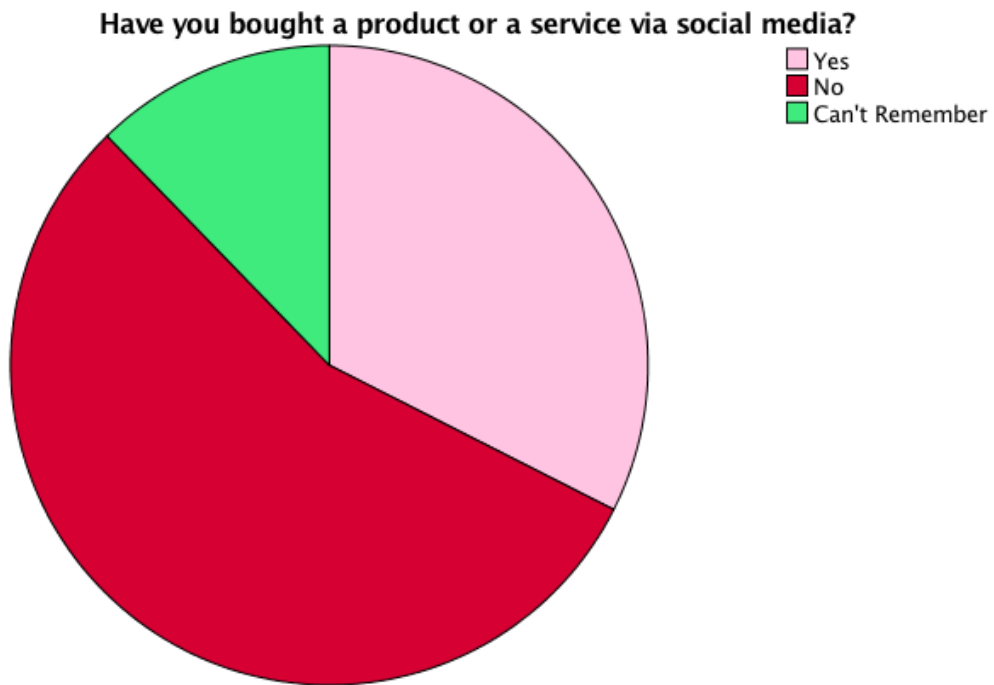


Figure 9: Buying products or services via social media



## 4.2. Reliability Analysis

The questionnaire aimed to investigate the impact of the experimental Instagram post with the following dependent variables: trust in Andy Jakobsen (i.e. the person who posted the Instagram advertisement), trust in the brand that Andy recommended, purchase intention of the products that Andy recommended as well as the likelihood that the respondent would spread positive word-of-mouth about the brand and the products that Andy recommended. Furthermore, the questionnaire aspired to explore social shopping in general with the following dependent variables: intention to participate in social commerce activities, purchase intention via social commerce networks and the impact of social media on consumer behaviour.

As several different questions were used to measure each construct, a reliability analysis on SPSS was required to guarantee the internal consistency of the questions. Cronbach's alpha was chosen as the measure of reliability. A question set with an alpha that is above 0,7 is considered reliable and they have internal consistency (eg. Tavakol & Dennick, 2011) The following tables show the Cronbach's alphas of the different constructs.

<u>Trust in Andy</u>	0,718
<u>Trust in the brand</u>	0,808
Purchase intention	0,858
Positive word-of-mouth	0,775

Table 1: Cronbach's alphas of question sets about the Instagram post

Intention to participate in social commerce	0,713
Purchase intention via social media	0,569
Impact of social media on consumer behavior	0,789

Table 2: Cronbach's alphas of question sets about social shopping in general

As seen from the Table 1 and Table 2, all the constructs except for purchase intention via social media possessed a Cronbach's alpha that was greater than 0,7. This proves that all of them are reliable and internally consistent. The fact that the questions about purchase intention via social media were not reliable together was not a surprise since the questions measured purchase intention in different timeframes: immediate purchase intention and purchase intention at some point in the future. It could be argued that these questions exclude one another and therefore internal consistency should not be expected. In consequence, questions that measured purchase intention via social media were analysed individually instead of combining them into one variable on SPSS.

#### **4.3. Hypothesis Testing**

All of the 10 hypotheses that were proposed in the literature review were tested on SPSS in order to find out if they were supported. In order to explore them, an independent samples t-test and bivariate correlation analysis were conducted to test each hypothesis. Intention to participate in social commerce and four individual questions measuring purchase intention via social media networks were used as the dependent variables when testing the hypotheses. As the reliability analysis did not find internal consistency between the four questions on purchase intention, the questions were treated separately. The results are illustrated in the following tables.

## CORRELATIONS

		Extraversion	Consc.	Openness	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
Intention to participate in social commerce	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-,050 <b>,600</b> 114	,119 <b>,206</b> 114	,053 <b>,573</b> 114	,025 <b>,793</b> 114	-,005 <b>,954</b> 114
I am willing to buy the products recommended by my friends on social media	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	,112 <b>,235</b> 114	,039 <b>,677</b> 114	,002 <b>,981</b> 114	,148 <b>,117</b> 114	-,016 <b>,870</b> 114
I immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-,113 <b>,230</b> 114	-,055 <b>,562</b> 114	-,097 <b>,302</b> 114	,041 <b>,667</b> 114	-,020 <b>,835</b> 114
I do not immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-,061 <b>,519</b> 114	-,019 <b>,842</b> 114	-,022 <b>,815</b> 114	,099 <b>,296</b> 114	-,036 <b>,706</b> 114
I buy the product at some point after obtaining information from social media	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	,151 <b>,110</b> 114	-0,098 <b>,299</b> 114	,075 <b>,429</b> 114	,056 <b>,553</b> 114	-,053 <b>,575</b> 114
		All 2-tailed significances >0,05	All 2-tailed significances >0,05	All 2-tailed significances >0,05	All 2-tailed significances >0,05	All 2-tailed significances >0,05

Table 3: Correlations

As seen on Table 3, none of the Big Five personality traits significantly correlated with intention to participate in social commerce (2-tailed significances greater than 0,05). The same goes with the four questions measuring purchase intention via social media networks.

### The Big Five - Means

	Extraversion	Consc.	Openness	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
Mean	4,8596	4,7193	5,2456	4,7368	4,4254

Table 4: The mean of each personality trait

Table 4 showcases the means of each personality trait on a seven point Likert scale. In the following tables, the respondents are classified into two groups – people with a high degree of a certain personality trait and people with a low degree of that trait. The cut-off point of these two groups was defined by the mean of the responses. People with a high degree of a certain trait were the ones who scored above the mean and vice versa.

### Group Statistics – Openness to Experience

	Openness to Experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social Commerce Intention	High	64	3,4219	,72859	,09107
	Low	50	3,3600	,63920	,09040
I am wiling to buy the products recommended by my friends on social media	High	64	3,5313	,90797	,11350
	Low	50	3,5600	,86094	,12176
I immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	High	64	1,7188	,74469	,09309
	Low	50	1,8000	,78246	,11066
I do not immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	High	64	4,2344	,75050	,09381
	Low	50	4,2800	,64015	,09053
I buy the product at some point after obtaining information from social media	High	64	3,0625	1,08196	,13524
	Low	50	2,9800	,76904	,10876

Table 5: Group statistics – openness

### Group Statistics – Extraversion

	Extraversion	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social Commerce Intention	High	64	3,3646	,73215	,09152
	Low	50	3,4333	,63353	,08959
I am wiling to buy the products recommended by my friends on social media	High	64	3,6406	,87952	,10994
	Low	50	3,4200	,88271	,12483
I immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	High	64	1,7031	,65900	,08237
	Low	50	1,8200	,87342	,12352
I do not immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	High	64	4,2188	,70076	,08760
	Low	50	4,3000	,70711	,10000
I buy the product at some point after obtaining information from social media	High	64	3,0938	,93806	,11726
	Low	50	2,9400	,97750	,13824

Table 6: Group Statistics - extraversion

### Group Statistics – Agreeableness

	Agreeableness	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social Commerce Intention	High	58	3,3994	,71324	,09365
	Low	56	3,3899	,66839	,08932
I am willing to buy the products recommended by my friends on social media	High	58	3,6552	,86960	,11418
	Low	56	3,4286	,89152	,11913
I immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	High	58	1,7414	,78495	,10307
	Low	56	1,7679	,73833	,09866
I do not immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	High	58	4,3103	,70604	,09271
	Low	56	4,1964	,69856	,09335
I buy the product at some point after obtaining information from social media	High	58	3,1207	,95656	,12560
	Low	56	2,9286	,95073	,12705

Table 7: Group statistics – agreeableness

### Group Statistics – Neuroticism

	Neuroticism	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social Commerce Intention	High	62	3,4301	,75117	,09540
	Low	52	3,3526	,61006	,08460
I am willing to buy the products recommended by my friends on social media	High	62	3,5645	,96871	,12303
	Low	52	3,5192	,77940	,10808
I immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	High	62	1,7742	,63812	,08104
	Low	52	1,7308	,88817	,12317
I do not immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	High	62	4,2581	,69978	,08887
	Low	52	4,2500	,71056	,09854
I buy the product at some point after obtaining information from social media	High	62	2,9677	,97456	,12377
	Low	52	3,0962	,93431	,12956

Table 8: Group statistics – neuroticism

### Group Statistics – Conscientiousness

	Conscientiousness	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social Commerce Intention	High	62	3,4435	,70125	,08906
	Low	52	3,3365	,67518	,09363
I am willing to buy the products recommended by my friends on social media	High	62	3,5000	,91884	,11669
	Low	52	3,5962	,84621	,11735
I immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	High	62	1,7419	,69978	,08887
	Low	52	1,7692	,83114	,11526
I do not immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	High	62	4,2258	,63812	,08104
	Low	52	4,2885	,77552	,10755
I buy the product at some point after obtaining information from social media	High	62	2,9516	,98226	,12475
	Low	52	3,1154	,92150	,12779

Table 9: Group statistics – conscientiousness

### T-tests (one-tailed)

		Extraversion	Consc.	Openness	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
Intention to participate in social commerce	F	,989	,004	,707	,930	2,231
	Sig.	,322	,953	,402	,337	,138
	t	-,527	,825	,474	,074	,597
I am willing to buy the products recommended by my friends on social media	F	,112	,908	,340	,373	1,625
	Sig.	,739	,343	,561	,543	,205
	t	1,327	-,577	-,172	1,374	,271
I immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	F	2,157	,419	,843	,045	6,659
	Sig.	,145	,519	,361	,833	,011
	t	-,814	-,190	-,565	-,185	,303
I do not immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	F	,123	4,451	1,946	,428	,546
	Sig.	,727	,037	,166	,515	,462
	t	-,612	-,473	-,343	,866	,061
I buy the product at some point after obtaining information from social media	F	,035	,030	7,475	,001	,188
	Sig.	,853	,863	,007	,979	,666
	t	,853	-,912	,456	1,075	-,714

Table 10: T-test results – The Big Five

Tables 5 through 9 show the group statistics for each personality while Table 10 presents the results of t-tests for each trait. Significant findings are marked in green in each table. Based on Table 5, it seems that participants with high openness to experience intend to participate in social commerce a bit more than people with lower degree of openness. However, this finding is not significant (one-tailed significance greater than 0,1). Additionally, as Table 3 suggests, no significant correlation between openness and social commerce intention were found. Hence, the following hypothesis is not supported:

H1: Openness to experience is positively related to intention to engage in social shopping activities.

Additionally, in some cases, people with high openness are more likely to buy products via social networks, especially at some point after obtaining information from social media. This difference was found significant (one-tailed significance less than 0,1), unlike the rest of the findings (one-tailed significances greater than 0,1). No significant correlations were found. As three out of four questions measuring purchase intention were not in significant relationship with openness to experience and no significant correlations were found, the following hypothesis is mostly not supported:

H2: Openness to experience is positively related to purchase intention via SCPs.

Tables 6 through 10 show the same phenomenon – the mean differences between people with a high amount of a certain personality trait and individuals with a lower amount of that trait were not notable in most cases. According to independent samples t-tests, most of these differences were not significant (all one-tailed significances were greater than 0,1). As illustrated by Table 6 and Table 7, no significant results were found when it comes to extraversion and agreeableness. Additionally, no significant correlations were found between these personality traits and social shopping habits. Hence, the following hypotheses are not supported:

- H3: Extraversion is positively related to intention to engage in social shopping activities.
- H4: Extraversion is positively related to purchase intention via SCPs.
- H9: Agreeableness is positively related to intention to engage in social shopping activities.
- H10: Agreeableness is positively related to purchase intention via SCPs.

The t-tests indicated significant results in two cases. First, as seen on Table 8, people with high neuroticism seem to be more likely to buy a product immediately after obtaining information from social media. This finding is opposite to H6. However, similar significant effect was not found in other questions that measured purchase intention. In the case of neuroticism, no significant correlations were found either. Consequently, the following hypotheses are not supported:

- H5: Neuroticism is negatively related to intention to engage in social shopping activities.
- H6: Neuroticism is negatively related to purchase intention via SCPs.

Second, as shown on Table 9, respondents with a high degree of conscientiousness scored significantly lower in statement 'I do not immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media.'. This finding is opposite to H8. In this case, other significant findings were not found. Consequently, the findings of the study do not support the following hypotheses:

- H7: Conscientiousness is negatively related to intention to engage in social shopping activities.
- H8: Conscientiousness is negatively related to purchase intention via SCPs.

Mostly, the results do not indicate any significant relationship between The Big Five personality traits, social commerce intention and purchase intention. However, this finding is significant as it differentiates social shopping from online shopping behaviour where the significant influence of The Big Five has been present. This topic will be discussed in more depth in 'Discussion and Analysis' chapter of this paper.



#### 4.4. The Instagram experiment

This part of the paper focuses on presenting the findings that were made from the experimental section of the questionnaire. The experimental part showed an Instagram post and asked questions measuring for instance recall abilities, trust and purchase intention. This section is organized in three main parts. First, the impact of hashtags is discussed. Second, the impact of personality traits is investigated. Last, other relevant findings are presented.

##### 4.4.1. The impact of hashtags

**Group Statistics – #Sponsored vs. #Ad**

	Hashtag	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
I would like the post on Instagram	Sponsored	58	2,8793	1,31226	,17231
	Ad	56	2,8036	1,34055	,17914
I would look for more information about the product	Sponsored	58	2,3103	1,15784	,15203
	Ad	56	2,3036	,97084	,12973
I would buy the product	Sponsored	58	1,7414	,84936	,11153
	Ad	56	1,5893	,78107	,10437
Number of correctly remembered hashtags	Sponsored	59	,3898	,76602	,09973
	Ad	56	,3214	,69038	,09226
Recalling the brand name accurately	Sponsored	60	,2250	,41604	,05371
	Ad	56	,1875	,37613	,05026
Positive word-of-mouth	Sponsored	58	2,8793	,77409	,10164
	Ad	56	2,7798	,75284	,10060
Trust in the brand	Sponsored	58	3,2414	,81121	,10652
	Ad	56	3,3393	,63720	,08515
Purchase intention	Sponsored	58	2,3931	,82926	,10889
	Ad	56	2,6107	,79216	,10586
Trust in Andy	Sponsored	58	2,9023	,82365	,10815
	Ad	56	2,8036	,70145	,09373

Table 11: Group statistics of the hashtags used in the Instagram posts

Table 11 compares the means of people who saw the Instagram post with hashtag '#Sponsored' and participants who saw the one with '#Ad'. As Table 11 indicates, the intention to like the post or look for information about the products is almost identical in these two groups. The intention to buy the product is slightly higher among people who saw the post with '#Sponsored'. Also, people who saw '#Sponsored' trusted Andy a bit more and they were slightly more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth about the brand and the products. However, an independent samples t-test indicated that none of these differences are significant as all 2-tailed significances were greater than 0,05. Also, no significant bivariate correlations were found. Therefore, it can be concluded that these hashtags do not affect likes, intention to look for more information, purchase intention, remembering the hashtags or the brand name, positive word-of-mouth, trust in the brand and trust in Andy.

Correlations – Hashtags						
		Number of correctly recalled hashtags	Trust in Andy	Trust in the brand	Purchase intention	Positive wom
Number of correctly recalled hashtags	Pearson Correlation	1	,127	,196 <sup>*</sup>	,106	,137
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,179	,037	,264	,146
	N	115	114	114	114	114

Table 12: Bivariate correlation - hashtags

Right after seeing the Instagram post, the participants were asked to try to remember as many hashtags as they could. A bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to find out if remembering the hashtags has an impact on other variables in the research. As Table 12 suggests, it was found that the number of correctly recalled hashtags is in significant correlation (two-tailed significance less than 0,05) with trust in the brand that was promoted in the Instagram post, Herschel Supply. All in all, the higher amount of correctly recalled hashtags increases the amount of trust in the brand. However, the number of

recalled hashtags did not affect trust in Andy, purchase intention and positive word-of-mouth.

Correlations – Recalling the brand name						
Did respondent accurately recall brand name		Did respondent accurately recall brand name	Trust in Andy	Trust in the brand	Purchase intention	Positive wom
	Pearson Correlation	1	-,048	,387**	,218*	,133
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,611	,000	,020	,158
	N	116	114	114	114	114

Table 13: Bivariate correlation – recalling the brand name

As indicated by Table 13, a significant positive relationship (two-tailed significance less than 0,05) was found between remembering the name of the brand and trusting the brand. Remembering the brand was found to have a significant relationship with purchase intention as well.

#### 4.4.2. The role of personality traits

Correlations					
I would BUY this product		Agreeablenss	Neuroticism	Buy the product on IG	TrustAndy
	Pearson Correlation	,104	,185*	1	,394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,270	,049		,000
	N	114	114	114	114
Trust in Andy	Pearson Correlation	,389**	,026	,394**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,785	,000	
	N	114	114	114	114

Table 14: Bivariate correlation – personality and Instagram post

Bivariate correlation analysis and independent samples t-tests were conducted on all of the Big Five personality traits. Out of these personality traits agreeableness and

neuroticism were found to have a significant role (two-tailed significance less than 0,05) in the consumer's reaction to the Instagram post, as showcased by Table 14. Agreeableness seems to positively affect the degree of trust in Andy. Moreover, according to the same table, people with high neuroticism have a higher purchase intention of the products Andy recommended.

#### 4.4.3. Other relevant findings

		Correlations						
		Trust in Andy	I would LIKE the post on IG	Trust in the brand	Purchase intention	Positive word-of-mouth	I would LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION	I would BUY the product
Trust in Andy	Pearson Correlation	1	,354**	,461**	,497**	,486**	,342**	,394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
	N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114
I would LIKE the post on IG	Pearson Correlation	,354**	1	,446**	,401**	,345**	,437**	,263**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000	,005
	N	114	114	114	114	114	114	114

Table 15: Bivariate correlation – Instagram post

A bivariate correlation and independent samples t-test were performed in order to generate a better understanding about the results of the experimental part of the questionnaire. Table 15 shows the correlations between different variables that were measured in this section of the survey. First, trust in Andy is in significant positive correlation with intention to like the post, trust in the brand, purchase intention, intention to spread positive word-of-mouth and intention to look for more information about the products (two-tailed significances less than 0,05). Second, according to the same table, intention to like the experimental Instagram post is also positively linked to all of the other variables in the table. (two-tailed significances less than 0,05).

## Correlations

		Overall impact of social media on consumer behavior	Intention to participate in social commerce	Trust in Andy	Trust in the brand	Purchase intention	Positive word-of-mouth
Overall impact of social media on consumer behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	,402**	,192*	,307**	,331**	,287**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,041	,001	,000	,002
	N	114	114	114	114	114	114
Intention to participate in social commerce	Pearson Correlation	,402**	1	,277**	,289**	,364**	,323**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,003	,002	,000	,000
	N	114	114	114	114	114	114

Table 16: Bivariate correlation – social media habits

Table 16 illustrates how perceptions about the Instagram post are influenced by how much the respondents thought that social media affects their consumer behaviour and the overall degree of intention to participate in social commerce activities. The table includes results from both of the Instagram posts that were used in the questionnaire. Overall perceived impact of social media on consumer behaviour and social commerce intention were in significant positive correlation with all of the measured variables : trust in Andy, trust in the brand, purchase intention and intention to spread positive word-of-mouth about the products.

## Group Statistics

	Have you bought a product or a service via social media?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Look for more information about the product	Yes	37	2,5676	,98715	,16229
	No	63	2,2540	1,12118	,14126
Would you buy the product?	Yes	37	1,9459	,91122	,14980
	No	63	1,6032	,77334	,09743

Table 17: Group statistics – Have you bought a product or a service via social media?

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Look for more information about the product	Equal variances assumed	,987	,323	1,410	98	,162	,31360	,22243	-,12780	,75500
	Equal variances not assumed			1,458	83,411	,149	,31360	,21515	-,11430	,74150
Would you BUY the product?	Equal variances assumed	,089	,766	2,002	98	,048	,34277	,17122	,00299	,68256
	Equal variances not assumed			1,918	66,037	,059	,34277	,17870	-,01401	,69956

Table 18: Independent samples t-test - Have you bought a product or a service via social media?

The last finding considering the Instagram post is illustrated by Table 17 and Table 18. As displayed by Table 17, people who had history in social media shopping ranked their likelihood to seek information and buy the product higher than those who had never bought something via social media networks. However, as displayed by Table 18, the difference in means is significant in purchase intention ( $t(df)=2,002$ ,  $p < ,05$ ) but not in likelihood to seek information ( $t(df)=1,410$ ,  $p > ,05$ ).

#### 4.5. Other findings

Correlations			
		Agreeable qs combined	Overall impact of social media on consumer behavior
Agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	1	,228 <sup>*</sup>
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,014
	N	114	114

Table 19: Correlations – Agreeableness and perceived impact of social media

Group Statistics					
	Agreeableness	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Overall impact of social media on consumer behavior	High	58	3,7759	,83861	,11011
	Low	56	3,4464	,97551	,13036

Table 20: Group statistics – Agreeableness and perceived impact of social media

As showcased by Table 19, a significant correlation was found between agreeableness and thinking that social media affects the respondent's consumer behaviour (Two-tailed significance less than 0,05). Table 20 shows how people with high agreeableness ranked the impact of social media higher than people with low agreeableness did. However, the two-tailed significance of this finding was slightly above 0,05 ( $t(df)=1,936$ ,  $p=0,055$ ).

Group Statistics					
	Overall impact of social media on consumer behavior	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
I am willing to buy the products recommended by my friends on social media	High	91	3,7033	,82320	,08629
	Low	23	2,9130	,84816	,17685
I immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	High	91	1,8901	,76667	,08037
	Low	23	1,2174	,42174	,08794
I buy the product at some point after obtaining information from social media	High	91	3,2308	,87021	,09122
	Low	23	2,2174	,85048	,17734

Table 21: Group statistics – Overall impact of social media

Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
I am willing to buy the products recommended by my friends on social media	Equal variances assumed	,221	,639	4,089	112	,000	,79025	,19328	,40730 1,17321
	Equal variances not assumed			4,016	33,262	,000	,79025	,19678	,39001 1,19049
I immediately buy a product after obtaining information from social media	Equal variances assumed	4,264	,041	4,047	112	,000	,67272	,16622	,34337 1,00207
	Equal variances not assumed			5,647	63,304	,000	,67272	,11913	,43467 ,91076
I buy the product at some point after obtaining information from social media	Equal variances assumed	,029	,865	5,012	112	,000	1,01338	,20220	,61275 1,41400
	Equal variances not assumed			5,082	34,591	,000	1,01338	,19942	,60835 1,41840

Table 22: Independent samples test – Overall impact of social media

The results of the questionnaire indicate that people who feel like social media influences their consumption behaviour are significantly more willing to buy products recommended by their friends on social media and more likely to buy the product either immediately or at some point after obtaining information about it from social media. This finding is presented by Table 21 and Table 22. On Table 21, “High” overall impact represents individuals who scored over three in this aspect on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly disagree to Strongly agree) and “Low” represents those who scored less than three. Similar results were found when the distinction between “High” and “Low” was four instead of three.

### Did respondent accurately recall brand name \* Did you know the brand before? Crosstabulation

Count		Did you know the brand before?		Total
		Yes	No	
Did respondent accurately recall brand name	No	1	86	87
	Yes	15	10	25
Total		16	96	112

Table 23: Crosstabulation – did you know the brand before?



### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	54,927 <sup>a</sup>	1	,000		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	50,226	1	,000		
Likelihood Ratio	47,295	1	,000		
Fisher's Exact Test				,000	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	54,437	1	,000		
N of Valid Cases	112				

a. 1 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3,57.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 24: Chi-Square Tests – did you know the brand before

The final finding of the research has to do with being able to recall the name of the brand at the end of the survey and knowing the brand before answering the questionnaire. As Tables 23 and 24 indicate, respondents who did not know the brand before had a significantly lower success rate at remembering the brand than people who knew the brand beforehand.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This part of the paper provides with discussion and analysis of the findings presented earlier in this paper. This section is divided into three parts. First, general discussion and analysis concerning the hypotheses of the study is provided. Second, the results from the Instagram experiment are analysed in greater depth. Last, the limitation of the study are discussed with suggestions for future research.

### 5.1. General discussion and analysis of the findings

Before constructing the questionnaire, existing literature in the fields of personality psychology, consumer behaviour, social commerce, peer influences and online shopping was reviewed in great depth in order to generate strong hypotheses for this study. This was especially important since the role of personality traits in the context of social shopping specifically was a topic which had not been investigated in other research. The hypotheses of this study were formed based on earlier findings about the significant role of The Big Five personality traits in online shopping behaviour. These findings were applied to the context of social shopping.

Chen (2011) found that people with high extraversion are the motivated to shop online because of the social aspects of online environments. Also, people with high openness to experience have been described as impulse shoppers (Gohary and Hanzaee, 2014) who are motivated to shop when they gain inspiration from others online (Bosnjak et al., 2007; Wang & Yang, 2008; Huang & Yang, 2010). A relationship between extraversion or openness and social commerce intention was mostly not found in this study. Hence, the findings of this study are contradicting when compared to earlier literature. The same goes with neuroticism. Huang and Yang (2010) stated that people with a high level of neuroticism are not motivated by social aspects of online shopping. On the contrary, this study found that immediate purchase intention is positively related to high neuroticism. This finding could be in line with the research of Gohary and Hanzaee (2014) as they state that neuroticism is in a positive relationship with impulse buying behaviour. In the literature review this statement was disregarded since other research claimed otherwise quite strongly. Finally, as stated in the literature review, the existing findings on the role of conscientiousness and agreeableness in even online shopping are quite limited. Thus, the findings about these two personality traits cannot be compared to the earlier findings that well.

All in all, surprisingly and interestingly, none of the hypotheses that were made based on earlier findings on online shopping were fully supported in this research. Some significant differences in means of individual questions were found. However, clear, continuous significant relationships between The Big Five Model personality traits and different social

commerce constructs could not be found. Hence, based on this finding, it can be argued that although social commerce is clearly a segment of online shopping, it is very different to more 'traditional' online shopping in terms of personality issues. The Big Five personality traits seem to control online shopping behaviour but not social shopping. This finding slightly contradicts with Huang and Yang's (2010) statement that The Big Five has an important role in online shopping behaviour as this was not the case in social shopping which is a form of online shopping, too.

## **5.2. Discussion and analysis of the Instagram experiment**

The Instagram experiment was conducted in order to find out which factors affect the purchase intention of the consumer. Additionally, the ability to recall hashtags and the name of the brand name were tested. Many statistically significant findings were made when conducting the Instagram experiment.

First, people with a higher intention to like the Instagram post also had a higher trust in the person who posted the Instagram picture as well as the brand. Additionally, their intentions to spread positive word-of-mouth and look for more information about the products were higher. Lastly, liking the post resulted in higher purchase intention. While many different aspects affect the final purchase intention of a consumer, these results indicate that Instagram likes play an important role. This result is in line with previous findings about Facebook because Lee et al. (2015) found that the number of likes correlates with the amount of sales of a certain product and that likes and value perceptions are correlated. Also, it was found that people who had bought a product or a service via social networks prior to taking the survey were more likely to buy this product as well. This finding might indicate that social shopping might be a habit that can happen repeatedly.

The next important finding was that trust is linked to purchase intention and other constructs that were measured. The higher the trust was, the more likely the respondent

reported to like the post, look for more information about it and even buy it. As stated by Barrick and Mount (1991), agreeable people are known for trusting others really strongly. This study also found a significant relationship between agreeableness and trust in Andy was found. Hence, based on these results, it could be stated that people with high agreeableness trust other's opinions in SCPs which then leads to purchase intention.

Another personality trait that affected the purchase intention of the products advertised on Instagram was neuroticism. Contrary to H6, which proposed that neuroticism might be negatively linked to purchase intention via social networks, high neuroticism turned out to correlate with purchase intention of the product on Instagram. Neuroticism has been a debated personality trait since Gohary and Hanzaee (2014) found that neuroticism leads to impulse buying while Chen (2011) stated the contrary. As impulse buying is strongly present in social shopping context, the results of this study are, again, more in line with the findings of Gohary and Hanzaee.

No differences were found between the two hashtags '#Ad' and '#Sponsored'. Based on this finding, it could be concluded that the choices of hashtags do not affect the other measured aspects such as trust, positive word-of-mouth, purchase intention or liking the post. Being able to remember the brand name increased the trust in the brand. However, it was also found that people who were able to recall the brand name at the end of the questionnaire were already familiar with the brand before participating in the survey. Hence, an earlier positive relationship with this specific brand might explain why these people trusted the brand more. Also, remembering more hashtags indicated higher trust in the brand. Perhaps these people were familiar with the brand and knew the hashtags that the company likes to use in advance.

### **5.3. Limitations of the study and future research**

There are some potential limitations to the study in question. First, the relatively sample size (n=117) might not necessarily provide with consistent and reliable results. The small

sample size can be especially problematic for example when comparing people who remembered a hashtag or the brand to those who did not since only 23% of the participants remembered at least one hashtag. Also, one problem regarding the small sample size was the fact that not that many respondents represented extremes of some of the five personality traits that were measured. All in all, if the sample was bigger, there could have been more people to represent these segments. When it comes to future research, a similar study could be conducted with a larger sample in order to enhance the ability to generalize the results.

The second problem is the uneven distribution of gender and nationalities. As stated in earlier chapters, 74% of the participants were females and 87,9% Finnish. Hence, reliable generalizations about consumers' social shopping habits, the role of personality in social shopping and other issues investigated in this paper can be quite difficult to make.

With regard to future research, different nationalities could be represented in order to compare similarities and differences between them. Currently, research on the role of personality traits in consumer behaviour has mostly been done in Asia. Hence, research about the topic on different continents would be recommendable. Also, the fact that the Big Five personality traits did not affect different social commerce constructs in Finland does not necessarily mean that that could not be the case in other countries. As stated before, no research on this specific topic was found when constructing the literature review. Hence, the possibilities to investigate the topic further are endless.

Thirdly, the survey looked at only one social media platform as well as just one product category. If more product categories were presented and several types of social commerce endorsements had been investigated on different platforms, the results might have been able to indicate more things that influence the persuasiveness of the advert. Perhaps some concrete features of social media advertisements could have been found that increase the consumers' purchase intention. In the case of this research, hashtags were not found to impact consumers' purchase intention or attitudes in any way.

Furthermore, the results can not necessarily be adapted in another platform or in another product category.

Conducting a study that would combine several social media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, would be advisable in order to be able to make better generalizations and compare different platforms. By including several product categories, the products themselves could be compared. As different people have different needs and interests, just one product category and one type of product does not please everyone. Additionally, several different features of the posts could be investigated by for example looking at the number of hashtags, gender of the person advertising a product or the impact of a 'Buy Now' button.

The last limitation of the study is the fact that it was conducted online. While this method reached people quickly both near and far, the participants responded the questionnaire independently. In consequence, they were not able ask questions that arose when making the survey. At the beginning of the survey the participants were given an e-mail address to contact if they had any questions. However, it could be assumed that many people might have skipped that opportunity even if they felt unclear about a specific question or the concepts used in the questionnaire. This could have been avoided by conducting the research in a quantitative way by organizing focus groups or other types of interviews. However, in getting reliable results with such methods would take significantly more time and effort.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

In order to conclude this paper, the following chapters are going to present some final points about this research. First, the main findings of the study are summarized in order to generate a clear picture about the most significant findings. Lastly, implications for international business are discussed.

## **6.1. Main findings**

The many findings of this research can be summarized in six most relevant findings. First, most of the Big Five Model personality traits were not found to determine intention to participate in social shopping and purchase intention via social networks. Second, Instagram likes are in a significant role when determining purchase intention since liking a product on Instagram is correlated with purchase intention of the product. Third, trust in the product endorser on Instagram has an important impact on attitudes towards the products, intention to like the post, intention to spread positive word-of-mouth, intention to look for more information about the product and purchase intention of the product. Fourth, hashtags were not found to influence any of these constructs.

Fifth, it was found that agreeableness increases trust in the Instagram endorser and that people with high neuroticism have a higher purchase intention on Instagram and a high tendency to buy a product on social media immediately, impulsively. Last, the results indicated that people who feel that their consumption choices are strongly impacted by social media have a higher purchase intention via social media networks in general.

## **6.2. Implications for international business**

This paper combines the existing literature about social shopping as well as personality traits. Also, this research provides insight on digital marketing strategies by presenting the results of the quantitative study that was conducted.

First, an important finding for global digital marketers is the fact that personality traits don't seem to affect social shopping habits too much. Planning and creating social media marketing efforts to suit the needs of different personalities would be arguably quite challenging. What would be even more difficult to marketers would be finding the consumers who possess a certain personality trait online. This finding facilitates the work

for international marketers as they can focus on other issues than the complex personality traits when planning their digital marketing strategies.

However, since people with high neuroticism seem to have a higher immediate purchase intention on social media, these people could be targeted by for example promoting immediate social shopping rewards to boost impulse buying behaviour or by emphasizing visual, social and hedonic aspects of shopping since these traits of social media commercials are found to increase the impulse buying tendency a lot (Xiang et al., 2016)

Likes and trust were found to influence purchase intention significantly. A practical implication of this finding would be creating content that the consumers want to like and that they trust. As stated by e.g. Afrasiabi and Benyoucef (2011), peers are trusted the most. Hence, emphasizing the importance of peer recommendations on Instagram marketing could improve trust, enhance sales and allow the marketers to use their efforts more effectively.

Also, it is important for marketers to know that when exposed to a brand for the first time on their Instagram feed, the name of the brand and the hashtags used often remain forgotten among consumers. Hence, exposing the consumers to a certain brand several times increases the likelihood to stay in people's minds. This claim is supported by the fact that most of the people who were able to recall the hashtags or the brand were familiar with the brand already beforehand.



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